



Report on political funding

Federal Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee has released its report today on the funding of political parties and election campaigns.

"Australia can be proud of its democratic system, but our funding and disclosure arrangements are in need of review and revitalising," said Committee Chair, Daryl Melham MP.

"In examining options for reform, the committee recognised that any changes made to funding and disclosure arrangements at the Commonwealth level should not just be a reaction to incidents or calls for reform, but a considered and carefully designed approach to help ensure transparency and accountability," said Mr Melham. Key reforms proposed by the committee to improve the transparency and accountability of the political financing arrangements at the Commonwealth level include:

- Reducing the disclosure threshold from the current \$11 900 (for the 2011-2012 financial year) to \$1 000;
- Single donations of \$100 000 to be disclosed to the AEC within 14 days of receipt and this information made publically available ;
- Treating related political parties as the same party for the purposes of the disclosure threshold to prevent 'donation splitting' between different branches;
- Requiring detailed disclosure of expenditure above the threshold;
- Money raised from fundraising events to be counted as donations;
- Making disclosure reporting six-monthly instead of annually, and investigating options for real time online disclosure;
- Banning anonymous donations above \$50 and prohibiting foreign donations;
- Introducing administrative funding to assist with the increased workload of disclosing details of donations and expenditure above the threshold;
- Strengthening penalties for more serious funding and disclosure offences and introducing administrative penalties for more straightforward offences; and
- Extending the Australian Electoral Commission's powers to conduct compliance reviews and to make the outcomes of reviews publically available.

The report is available on the committee's website at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/political%20funding/report.htm>

It includes dissenting reports from the Coalition and the Australian Greens.

Fact sheets on key issues and recommendations are available at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/political%20funding/media.htm>

For media comment: Please contact the Committee Chair, Daryl Melham MP on 02 6277 2054 (Parliament House office) or 02 9774 2111 (Electoral office).

For general information: Contact the secretariat on 02 6277 2374 or jscem@aph.gov.au.